

Inspection of Brockenhurst College

Inspection dates: 21 to 24 November 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Education programmes for young people **Good**

Adult learning programmes **Good**

Apprenticeships **Good**

Provision for learners with high needs **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Information about this provider

Brockenhurst College is a general further education college located in the New Forest, Hampshire. The college offers a broad curriculum from entry level to level 5 in both academic and vocational subjects. The largest subject areas include the sciences, art and design, media, sport, engineering, and preparation for work. Leaders have recently developed an independence hub for learners with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The college has three satellite sites: a construction and marine technologies centre at Marchwood; 'Quickstart' employment support in Southampton; and a health and beauty academy in New Milton. In addition, adult courses are offered at a range of community venues in the local area.

At the time of the inspection, there were 2,864 learners on education programmes for young people. Of these, the significant majority of learners were studying level 3 courses. Half of level 3 learners were studying vocational qualifications, one quarter A levels and one quarter a mixed A-level and vocational programme. Approximately 350 learners were continuing to study GCSE English and mathematics qualifications as part of their studies. The college has recently introduced a T-level qualification in education and early years. However, due to the newness of this course, it was not in

scope for inspection. There were approximately 1,408 adult learners studying a wide range of short or part-time qualifications, including employment support, community and leisure, adult literacy and numeracy, and professional and distance learning. Eighteen learners were on full-time access to higher education (access to HE) programmes. There were 68 apprentices on programmes at levels 2 to 4. Of these, around one third were aged 16 to 18 years. Most apprentices were studying courses in the hospitality or business sectors. There were 187 learners with high needs. Over half of these learners were studying vocational courses at levels 2 and 3. The remainder were studying foundation and level 1 programmes. Three learners with complex SEND were in specialist provision in the new independence hub.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Most learners and apprentices thrive in the inclusive and supportive learning environment that leaders and staff have created. They rightly value the positive, respectful culture, and they are confident to contribute their views and learn from those of their teachers and peers. Consequently, most learners and apprentices enjoy their studies and are highly motivated to learn.

Most learners and apprentices develop substantial new knowledge and skills because of the high-quality teaching and support they receive. For example, commis chef apprentices benefit from industry-standard training that helps them to quickly consolidate their skills in knife handling. A-level art learners use their knowledge of technique and process to produce high-quality monoprints. Adult learners on employability courses become increasingly confident to apply for jobs and secure employment, which many do. As a result, most learners and apprentices produce work of a high standard, achieve well and progress to positive destinations.

Most learners and apprentices develop their confidence and resilience successfully. They benefit from valuable initiatives, such as the 'change begins with me' programme, which improves their self-understanding and mental well-being. Learners with high needs grow in independence and make valued new friendships. Most learners participate in extra-curricular activities. As such, they extend their social networks and develop their interests very well.

Most learners and apprentices are well informed about relevant and contemporary topics, such as democracy, equality and diversity, and healthy relationships. Learners and apprentices are encouraged to become responsible and active citizens. For example, learners on education programmes for young people participate in the students' union to improve the college's social space. Adults who study essential English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) produce simple sentences on what it means to be an active citizen and why it is important to have a voice. Consequently, most learners and apprentices are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Learners and apprentices feel safe at college and in the workplace. They know how to report concerns if needed. They value staff's zero tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination and harassment and, as such, incidents are rare. Learners and apprentices benefit from a comprehensive focus on health and safety and risk management in their studies. As a result, they know how to stay safe in practical learning environments and at work.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders, managers and governors have established a broad range of productive partnerships with stakeholders, both locally and regionally. They work closely with Dorset and Solent local enterprise partnerships and Chambers of Commerce. As such, they clearly understand the skills priorities in the area. Leaders review their

curriculum offer to respond effectively to these needs, such as in the development of green construction and engineering, maritime and hospitality courses.

Leaders cooperate effectively with higher education partners to address skills shortages and adapt the curriculum accordingly. They work closely with Solent University to ensure courses in marine and electrical engineering help address local and national skills gaps on and offshore. In level 3 media, managers work successfully with stakeholders to develop employer-led briefs so that learners gain the sector knowledge and skills they need for university and future employment. Leaders collaborate well with other post-16 providers in the Solent region to share expertise and secure funding for initiatives that meet current and future skills needs. As a result of employer feedback, a cross-provider team is creating a virtual reality employability app to help learners develop valuable interview skills.

Leaders work closely with stakeholders to identify and respond to their skills priorities. They work successfully with construction companies and Jobcentre Plus to design and implement adult employability 'QuickStart' programmes to support the high demand for training new entrants in the building sector. Staff have developed units in health and safety, sustainability and social value that align carefully with employers' policies. Leaders have worked diligently with partners, both locally and nationally, to support the development of work-based routes in the hospitality industry. For example, teachers are working to inform the development of a new pastry chef apprenticeship standard in response to employer demand.

Managers and staff work well with relevant stakeholders on most courses to ensure that the curriculum provides the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers need. For example, in level 2 business, learners gain up-to-date industry knowledge from guest speaker sessions on customer service, product knowledge and financial services. In level 3 sport and exercise science, managers have tailored units to ensure activities meet the sports industry requirement to maintain, support and develop the physical health and activity of all. Leaders have clear plans in place to secure stakeholder input in those curriculum areas that currently do not benefit from this.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and managers have designed a range of high-quality vocational and academic courses that meet the needs of learners and stakeholders very well. For example, leaders plan access to nursing and midwifery courses in collaboration with university partners to ensure that learners gain the necessary science knowledge for successful progression. In level 3 engineering, leaders have adapted the curriculum to ensure that learners develop securely the mathematics and practical expertise required for industry and higher study. Consequently, learners develop the essential knowledge and skills that employers need to grow and upskill their workforce successfully.

Leaders, managers and staff are ambitious for their learners and apprentices, including those from disadvantaged groups or with high needs. For example, leaders have improved provision for learners with high needs significantly. In partnership with the local authority, they successfully developed an independence hub for learners with SEND who have particularly complex needs. As a result, most learners and apprentices make rapid progress in their learning.

Highly experienced and qualified teachers plan the curriculum carefully and logically to ensure that learners and apprentices develop the knowledge and skills they need. For example, in adult ESOL courses, teachers help learners to develop basic phonetics before teaching verbs and grammar. In level 2 electrical installation, teachers ensure that learners can wire single lighting circuits safely before moving on to more complex circuits and advanced skills, such as radial power.

Most staff teach new and challenging concepts skilfully, to help learners and apprentices understand and apply new knowledge very well. In A-level biology, teachers use discussion effectively to ensure that learners can explain key concepts, such as enzymes, confidently. Consequently, most learners build complex knowledge over time successfully.

Most teachers use assessment well to identify what learners and apprentices already know and can do. They give useful feedback, which helps learners and apprentices to improve their work. For example, A-level art teachers explain to learners precisely how to develop their designs to achieve high grades, which almost all subsequently do. In level 3 team leader workplace observations, teachers give apprentices clear feedback on how to delegate effectively. As a result, most learners and apprentices build complex knowledge and skills over time successfully. In a small minority of subjects, learners on education programmes for young people do not benefit from sufficiently detailed feedback to help them improve their work. As a result, these learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Teachers support learners well to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. In GCSE English, learners evaluate set texts critically, using their knowledge of metaphors, repetition and emotive language accurately. GCSE mathematics teachers use questioning skilfully so that learners become fluent in converting ratios to fractions. As a result, learners progress well in these subjects, and almost all improve their grades successfully.

Leaders and managers have developed a purposeful and highly personalised curriculum for learners with high needs. They work closely with secondary schools and external agencies to plan learners' successful transition to college. Managers and staff ensure that learners with SEND have swift access to the specialist interventions they require to participate in learning successfully, such as speech and language therapy and physiotherapy. Staff work closely with parents and carers to ensure that learners' needs are fully understood and met appropriately. Staff set manageable and relevant targets for learners to help them develop their knowledge, skills and independence over time. As a result, learners with high needs develop skills for learning, work and life successfully.

Leaders work closely with local partners to design courses that enable adult learners to develop the personal, social and employability skills they need. For example, staff work closely with the New Forest Primary Care network to ensure that community learning programmes reach the most disadvantaged to help them integrate into their communities. They use clear processes for recording and recognising the achievements of adult learners. As such, adult learners become more confident and social, and they develop the skills they need to re-enter employment.

Leaders do not ensure that adult learners are consistently aware of the additional enrichment opportunities available to them through the college.

Leaders recruit apprentices appropriately. They work closely with most employers to plan training to ensure it is appropriate for apprentices' job roles and the sectors in which they work. Staff align on- and off-the-job training effectively so that most apprentices have plentiful opportunities to practise and consolidate their learning. Leaders and staff make sure that apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training. As a result, most apprentices make rapid progress, achieve well and become better employees.

At the time of the inspection, a small number of apprentices remained in learning past the end date for their programme. For these apprentices, leaders use clear intervention plans successfully to support apprentices to complete their learning as quickly as possible.

Teachers and staff provide relevant and useful careers advice and guidance, which helps learners and apprentices to make informed decisions about their next steps. Level 3 and adult access to HE learners benefit from particularly comprehensive support for their higher education options and university applications. For example, staff provide specialist tutorial sessions for A-level biology learners who aspire to study medicine or veterinary medicine at top universities. Consequently, most learners secure their first choice of university successfully. Most learners on education programmes for young people benefit from relevant, high-quality work placements or work-related activity. As a result, they develop the competencies and behaviours for employment effectively and gain valuable insight into the world of work.

Leaders promote high aspirations for staff and a supportive working culture. Staff value highly the strategic direction and support new leadership is providing following a period of instability. Staff benefit from high-quality and relevant professional development, which makes them more effective in their teaching and support roles. For example, leaders have trained all staff in how to recognise the signs and symptoms of trauma in young people. Consequently, staff are better equipped and confident to support vulnerable learners and apprentices.

Governors work closely with leaders to provide effective oversight. They share leaders' vision and strategic aims. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision and the areas that leaders are working to improve. Governors use their significant skills and experience to support and

challenge leaders to secure improvements, such as increasing the number of apprentices who complete their courses on time. As a result, they support continuous improvement in the college very well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Improve the quality of teachers' developmental feedback on a minority of courses so that learners know how to improve their work and achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Continue to ensure that all apprentices achieve their qualifications successfully and in a timely manner.
- Ensure that all adult learners are aware of the additional enrichment activities available to them through the college so that they benefit from opportunities to further develop their personal and social interests.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130690
Address	Lyndhurst Road Brockenhurst Hampshire SO42 7ZE
Contact number	01590 625555
Website	https://www.brock.ac.uk/
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Helen Odhams
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	31 January to 3 February 2017
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal, curriculum and quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Sara Woodward, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Richard Kirkham	His Majesty's Inspector
Pam Richardson	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Marta Gajewska-Kopczyk	Ofsted Inspector
Nicki Adams	Ofsted Inspector
Jeremy Kerswell	Ofsted Inspector
Suki Dhesi	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Addis	Ofsted Inspector
Emily Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Jo-Ann Henderson	His Majesty's Inspector
Jaswant Mann	Ofsted Inspector
Daniel Beale	His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023